

Espinas y Flores

BULLETIN OF THE SAN DIEGO CACTUS AND SUCCULENT SOCIETY
Affiliate of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America, Inc.

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AUGUST MEETING DATE:

Saturday, August 12th. 1978

PROGRAM:

Joyce Tate, author of the "Cactus Cook Book", will present her fascinating lecture on "The Native uses of Succulents around the World", illustrated with slides.

In addition to Joyce's presentation, Bob Taylor will be with us to conduct the "Grafting Clinic".

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DEADLINE FOR SEPTEMBER ISSUE.....AUGUST 21st. PLEASE

Cactus-of-the-Month

Parodia

Dr. Ronald E. Monroe

The genus Parodia is one of the most attractive of the South American cacti and is in desperate need of revision. Originally proposed by Spegazzini via a novo comb. of Hickenia, Microsperma and Islaya, the group is currently composed of over 100 species and nearly 50 varieties and forms with most of the latter occurring in P. maasii (the genus Islaya is now considered as proper to Neoporteria).

As a rule, the group is globular to elongate and seldom over 15 cm high, solitary or caespitose. The ribs are well marked, straight or spiral with small low tubercles. The spines are variable as to thickness, shape and color and the centrals are often used to differentiate the group into sections (species with hooked centrals, species with curved centrals and species with straight centrals). While most species have woolly arioles (P. punae, P. laui, P. aureispina, etc.) some contain very little to none (P. thionantha, P. weberiana) and some species bear so much wool, particularly near the crown, that the plants' bodies are nearly hidden from view (P. backebergiana, P. gibbulosoides, and P. salmonea).

The flowers are nearly always in the crown of the plant on new growth and are extremely showy (P. chrysacanthion, golden yellow; P. nivosa, fiery scarlet; P. maasii, brick red; P. setifer, white; P. salmonea, pink) and most remain open for several days; older plants may bloom continuously over 1-2 months.

The genus is distributed widely from Bolivia to North Argentina and Paraguay to Southern Brazil and are found at rather low altitudes on grassy plains to over 3000 m high. They are used to considerable water and most prefer an acid soil. Many species appear to have two main growing periods per year--one in the spring and another in the fall with a midsummer rest period (the winter rest period need not exceed two months).

Best cultivated growth is attained via semi-shaded conditions (ca. 50 per cent shade) and feeding Stern's Miracid[®] every two weeks during the growing period. The plants are propagated by seed or cuttings (offset production can be induced by cutting out the crown of the plant) and the main pests are mealy bug, scale insects and spider mites which are easily controlled by Cygon-2E.

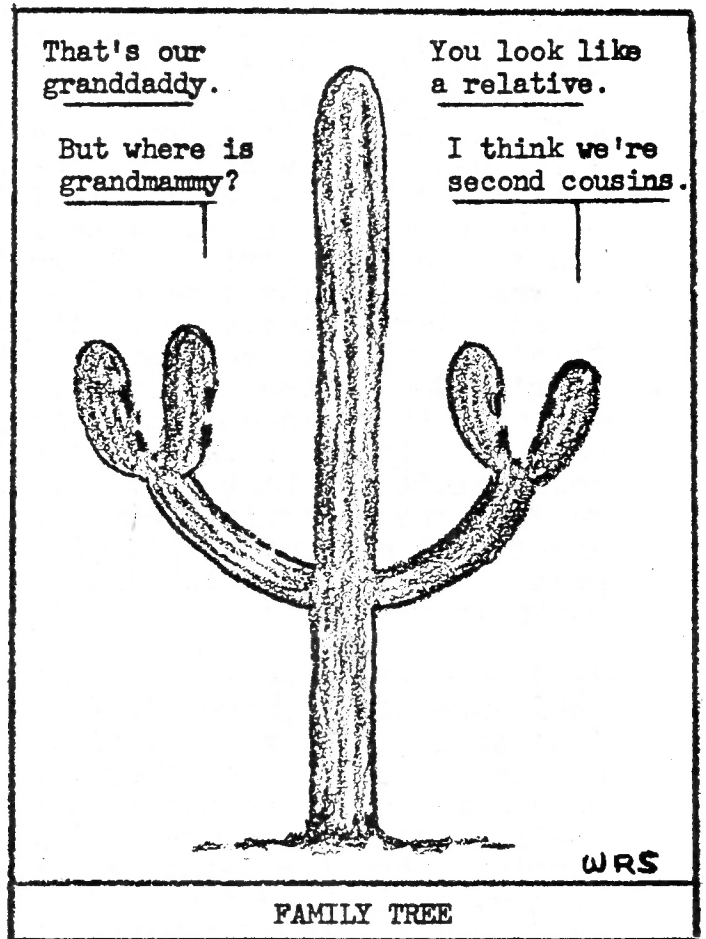
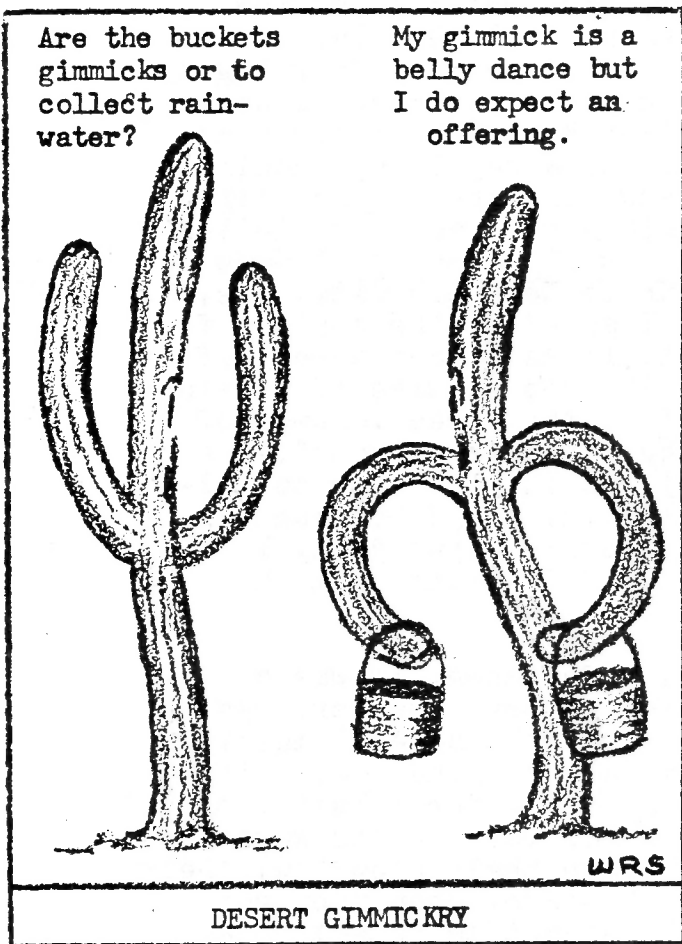
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Borg, J. 1959. Cacti. Blanford Press, England; pp. 323-328.

Use of Green-o-Matic® --Warning

Dr. Ronald E. Monroe

Green-o-Matic®, a relatively new water additive to adjust pH, wash out salts and to improve nutrient uptake by plants was given a preliminary test screen and it failed! Studies in water only demonstrated a pH 3.5 reading vs. pH 7.8 for regular tap water. Such a pH is far too acid for plant use and I cannot recommend the material for use on succulent plants at this time. More detailed investigations are under way and will hopefully be published in some future issue of the CSSA journal.



Some forty years ago, on my first trip to the northwest, I saw a funny looking wild plant with big flat leaves covered with thorns that was called a cactus. A little later in Arizona, I saw another, quite different, wild plant with long round branching leaves and needle-like thorns that was also called a cactus. Asking about this apparent discrepancy, I was told that the first kind was a prickly pear cactus and the second kind a cholla cactus. Futhermore, they weren't leaves and the prickles were called spines. Then someone else mentioned that out on the desert there was still a third kind called an ocotillo. It really had leaves and also beautiful red flowers on the ends of the stems after the spring rains. That's when I first learned that cactuses had flowers. Gradually I picked up the additional names "saguaro" and "barrel", both cacti of course, bringing my total known "species" to four after reclassifying the ocotillo.

And that was as much as I knew about cacti until I retired to California a few years ago. Three years ago I was given four small cacti, each different and new to me, thereby doubling my knowledge of species. They sat on the patio for several weeks and I looked at them from time to time. Each time I saw something new. It was obvious that there was a gap in my knowing that might be interesting to fill. And like the retired fire horse who heard the alarm bell, I joined two cactus societies and took a field trip to Taylor's Cactus Gardens at El Cajon. It was like taking a bedouin herdsman to New York City. Yes, I had a little catching up to do so I asked at the society for "the" definitive book on the subject. I was handed a copy of Borg's "Cacti" (out-of-date), shown the two volumes of Britton and Rose (published in the early 20's), the three volumes of Jacobsen with some remarks about "the other succulents", the four volumes of Lamb (nice pictures) and the forty or so volumes of the Journals, wherein, I was told, could be found a great deal more of topical interest. Somewhat put down, I took home a "how-to" pamphlet and a piece of Jade plant from the exchange table.

My four little cacti still glowed with defiance. It was a challenge and I accepted. The deciding factor, however, was the people I had met - a hundred or so at the several meetings of the two societies. They were stimulating. They each lit up with a zealous fire about one thing or the other relating to their particular interest. Although their backgrounds were far ranging, they all seemed anxious to share their know-how, their plants, their knowledge and their enthusiasm. When they got serious with names, however, they all seemed to revert to a foreign argot - but without pretention. They were not the least bit cowered by that formidable library of technical stuff. It was all so reassuring that I did not know whether the gate was being opened before me or closing behind me until after I heard the slam!

And that's how I got bit.

I've attended all of the fifteen yearly picnics at the Taylor's Cactus Ranch - this year was unusually good. A silent bid, plus auction of some spectacular rare plants. And the pleasure of having the Taylor's guests, Mr. and Mrs. Caulk.

Helen Caulk was the first secretary in 1961, and Harry the first vice-president and second president. Also, I remember, Harry - a full-time employee at Convair - tackling the Del Mar Fair (1962) all alone, and winning the Blue Ribbon. The munificent sum of \$100.00 was donated to the fledgling Club. From that modest start, the yearly Del Mar Fair was snowballed into four full exhibits by 1965.

The enthusiasm was so great that we won the new Congenial Co-operative Award several years straight. I remember how proud I was of my contributions, and I was so happy to give of my time, effort, and plants!

We had working parties every day, a week before the opening date. Twenty and thirty people, with loaded cars, would converge, with shovels, straw hats (Sophie L.) paint brushes and tweezers, for grooming, and elbow grease. Then, Nellie Kennett would break out her coffee pot, etc., and, with the contributory gourmet foods from the other workers, we would eat like Kings and Queens from Nellie's station-wagon tailgate. Mmm - I remember the delicious Jewish cabbage and tomato pickles Ruth Richardson brought, that she had received as a gift. And Sophie Loyland's delicious home-made goodies, and Hazel Scott's cookies, and.. and - I could go on forever. And the year Julianne Rice brought in, from her home in Haltville, a whole roasted turkey. And the salads, fruit etc. everyone contributed....

These were fun times too. The time Nellie Kennett stood on Bill Nelson's shoulders to shimmy up the light pole to plug in the coffee pot, etc., etc.

In 1965, with about 60 members, we had four exhibits: Rock Garden, Succulent, Cactus and Hanging Basket. In 1977, with 149 family memberships (there are seven in one family alone!), we had no exhibit at the Del Mar Fair. For shame!!

How about rising up again, San Diego C. & S.S.! We have a new group. Us old timers are worn out. Wouldn't you love to be part of that great Fair? You help at your leisure, come and go as you please, and contribute at least one plant. And the 'piece de resistance' was the free passes to the helpers, and to point out, with pride, to our friends and relatives, our contributions and brawn that put up that lovely display. C'mon, Ron Baines. I hear you're very artistic. Volunteer for the 1978 chairmanship, or a category, and help us get back into the swing. C'mon all of you - volunteer now!!

HELP WANTED!

Perlso Lewis

An interesting job will be open for an extrovert, or anyone who loves to meet our members.

The job is Receptionist, with me, at the door each meeting. Edith Billmeyer has held that position for eight years. She's moving to Lawrence Welk's Mobile Park Village, and must reluctantly give the job up. So - anyone interested, please contact me at the door at the next meeting. Good luck, Edith. You did a fantastic job and we all wish you the best of luck in your new home.

THE "DOG DAYS" - AND A WAY
TO COOL OFF.

Audrey Johnson

This beautiful weather has gone on and on - and, it's true, it is beautiful, but oh, so hot, here in Escondido! I, and all my plant-y companions, are already beginning to feel (and show) the effects. We are one and all slightly wilted, and, although it is only July, "done to a turn". Water, of course, is our only saviour - for me, it comes in the form of an occasional dip in my neighbour's pool, or the ocean; for the plants, well, they require almost non-stop sprinkling!! Even so, by the time it cools off in the evening, we are all decidedly the worse for wear....

Once again it is nearing the time of the full moon, and, as usual, this is making me restless - especially in conjunction with the heat. The valley is beautiful in the moonlight, and I begin to feel that further midnight strolls are in the offing now that it is again too warm to sleep comfortably. (Sleep seems such a waste of time anyway!) The other evening I was tempted to venture forth beyond the shadow of the house when, suddenly, there arose a furious barking from all the nearby dogs, mingled with the wailing of coyotes - almost at the foot of our driveway! Even more than the waddling nocturnal opossums, I would hesitate to tackle coyotes while "all by myself in the moonlight", but there will be other nights, I'm sure, when I shall feel a little braver!

After a number of very hot afternoons spent on my "rock", followed by feverish scrambles to prepare supper for my returning men-folk, we have decided, tonight, to leave the house to cool off, and repair to the Wild Animal Park. Supper, overlooking the lake, at the Mombasi Cooker, by the light of the romantic W.A. Park lanterns, and later a nearly full moon - who could ask for anything more? After supper we plan a moonlit trip on the Monorail, and are hoping that, this time, we shall not be travelling behind a meandering skunk, as we did on the last occasion. Our driver, naturally, was most reluctant to speed up and pass this little fellow, in case he became indignant and showed his disapproval in true skunk fashion! It all slowed down our journey considerably, but he did eventually decide to go off in a different direction, after which everything went off on schedule!

Later: Last night's evening trip, as on previous occasions, came well up to expectations, and I thoroughly recommend the idea to those of you who hanker after an evening meal outdoors, in beautiful surroundings, at the end of an extremely hot Summer day. After supper it was still light enough to enjoy those plants in bloom, and I was particularly interested in the many and varied flowering vines, always great favourites of mine. (To this day, I regret that here, in Escondido, I am unable to grow my Heavenly Blue morning glories, with which I surrounded the house under more humid, and less windy, conditions in other States.) Owing to the half-light, I was not able to decipher the true names of these vines, but I was very impressed by some very colourful ones with daisy-type flowers, also the one they called the Snail Vine, which was loaded with beautiful lavender blooms, something like half-size sweet peas. I shall most certainly have to investigate these some time with Jim Gibbons, or, maybe, our own Katherine McDonald. I am determined to try again to grow more vines - perhaps in one of my all-too-scarce shady areas on the north

side of the house. After my inspection of the vines, I proceeded to the new greenhouse, which at present contains a gorgeous display of bromeliads from a Vista Nursery, all blooming profusely. How did they grow them to such perfection, I wondered enviously, and then gave myself the answer: by having a great many plants from which to chose, and growing them under perfect conditions (I told myself). After that I felt a little better about my own rather inferior results with plants grown on my windy and almost unprotected hillside, and hurried off to join the rest of the party on the Monorail.

This time all went well, with no wandering skunk out for a leisurely stroll along the tracks! Some of the animals were gathered in groups to socialize in the moonlight, others appeared to be sound asleep, and our guide explained that many of them sleep when they feel like it, day or night regardless. (Who's for a siesta under a shady tree in the noonday heat? Sounds good to me.) It struck me that this is really a pretty sensible idea in this weather, but then, as you all know by now, Ye Lady Ed. has a close kinship with the animals anyway. But then again, haven't we all?!!

Meanwhile, fellow members, keep cool any way you can.....
Ye Lady Ed.

P.S. This postscript business seems to be becoming a habit with me, and yet, once again, I feel perfectly justified in adding it.

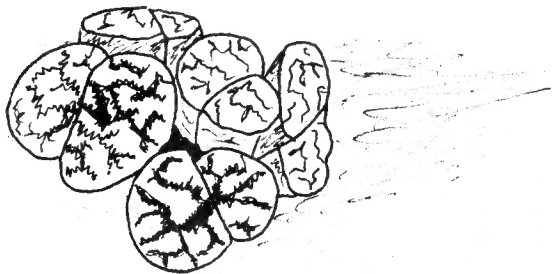
"Zoo Nooz" arrived yesterday, just after I had finished typing my article for this month's bulletin. As usual, I read it cover-to-cover with enjoyment, and finally reached the last page where, to my amazement, I found the very vine about which I had been writing, and had intended to enquire, depicted on the back cover in "glorious techni-colour"! To my further surprise, it turned out to be yet another Senecio (you all remember Senecio Angulatus, about which I've written so often, I'm sure). This one is Senecio Confusus, and it has an abundance of the daisy-type flowers in a bright orange-y red colour, which makes it particularly colourful. It's common name is the Mexican Flame Vine. Whether I shall have as much success with this Senecio as with the other one remains to be seen, but I'm certainly going to try! Look out, Jim and Katherine, here I come for cuttings!!

A.J. - Y.L.E.

Regalement for August:

The following members are reminded that they signed up to bring refreshments at the August Meeting:

Shirley Berry
Laura Fowlkes
Harriet Sopp
Verna Pasek
Dorothy Ronski
Judy Hannula
Randy Jungers
May Andrews
Audrey Johnson



Succulent-of-the-Month

SUMMER STONES

by Rick Latimer

The name *Mesembryanthemum* means Mid-day flower (Greek: *mesembria*=midday, *anthemum*=flower) and not flower with the embryo (seeds?) in the middle as I had previously thought. This month we put families, subfamilies, tribes, and subtribes to the way-side and consider the plants foremost from the standpoint of habit, habitat, and culture. The summer active/winter dormant living rock Mesembs that are August's succulent-of-the-month are such because they are native to areas more inland and even into the eastern half of South Africa than the winter active/summer dormant mimicry Mesembs of the immediate western and southwestern coast of Southern Africa of last February's Winter Stones (*Aloinopsis*, *Argyoderma*, *Bijlia*, *Conophytum*, *Dactylopsis*, *Didymaotus*, *Fenestraria*, *Gibbaeum*, *Imitaria*, *Monilaria*, *Muiria*, *Oophytum*, and *Ophthalmophyllum* & *Titanopsis*).

An interesting exception is *Jensenobotrya lossowiana*, which is native to only one hill right in the middle of the Winter Stone territory. However, this plant survives in a peculiar ecological niche because of summer sea fogs gives it moisture and the cliffs upon which it lives shade it from the sun. Some stems are said to be as old as 200 years. The leaves look like a bunch of grapes.

Pleiospilos (Greek: full of dots) is one of the old favorites being most often known as the split rock (*P. nelii*). The 1977 Abbey Garden Catalogue had a beautiful watercolor by Marguerite Scott on its cover. In nature, *P. bolusii* has the appearance of dried liver and can be hardly distinguished from the chunks of iron ore on the surface of the soil in which it is found.

Frithia pulchra's windowed leaves look like textures *Fenestraria*'s baby toes, except that the native habitat of *Frithia* is Pretoria which is 1200 Km. east of Luederitz, the habitat of *Fenestraria*. Flowers of *Frithia* may be either magenta or white.

In summer *Dinteranthus* needs to bake in the sun to bring out its beautiful pink-grey coloring and *Lapidaria margaretae* its gray-green coloring tinged with pink. These two always occur in white quartzite. There is a theory that plants growing in quartz may need to reflect light in order to prevent them from absorbing too much of it, and thus they simulate the light-reflecting surface of the surrounding rocks. But while this may explain the color of these plants it does not account for their shape. The adaptive camouflage exhibited by most flowering stones is, in fact, their most remarkable and puzzling aspect. It is thought by some to be a protective device against browsing animals, but these animals usually rely more on their sense of smell than sight.

If the *Conophytums* are the Queen genus of the Winter, than *Lithops* is the King of the Winter. Some of the *Lithops* are native to the "Winter" areas, but in general we will deal with them as "Summer" plants. Anyone who was at our Open House this year and saw Betty Athy's exhibit knows what a lithop is. Since there are

so many interesting comments about Lithops, I will conclude with them:

Louise Teare (Australia)-The most difficult of all is *L. optica rubra*. They resent being moved. Don't take them to shows as as some of my friends did and lost their plants! As mature plants over one year, they require less water than other lithops.

David S. Hardy S. Africa)-*Lithops ruschiorum* grows along of the Namib Desert where the rainfall rarely exceeds $\frac{1}{2}$ inch a year. A large plant weighing 11.5 grams when fully exposed to the sun was found to loose only 0.2 grams in 15 days. Apparently they are able to withstand on moisture extracted from mists.

Leo J. Pickoff (Riverside)-Water during the growing season, i. e., from the time the old leaves have been completely consumed by the new ones until the new leaves show through the new fissure. Lithops can take alot of sun-in fact it enhances their color.

?-Water lithops every 7-10 days. If they get no water from June 1 to August 1 they look better. (Not seedlings).

Ed Storms (Ft. Worth)-Most collectors seem to think the plant is dormant when the old leaves begin shriveling in winter after flowering. However, inside those leaves are the new ones developing which surely constitutes a state of active growth. Also, during the long hot days of summer when the plant has achieved full development of its leaves, it is generally considered to be growing (and is watered), but there is actually no further development until the flowers appear in the fall.

There is considerable variation of pattern (dots, veins, and globs), shape (short squat ones to tall thin ones), and colors (usually rusts and earths: ochres, umbers, siennas, chalks, and also green). A collector can have their own "polished rock collection" in a windowsill.

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